

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

The Veterinarian Who Judged Best in Show at the Westminster

By Dr. Donald F. Smith
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In 1938, Josephine Deubler was the first woman veterinary graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. Sixty years later, she was the first veterinarian to judge Best in Show at the Westminster Kennel Club at Madison Square Garden.



*Dr. Josephine Deubler (L) judging Best in Show at Westminster Kennel Club, 1998.
Next to her is Mr. Peter Green (handler of winning dog),
and Mr. David Frei (R), co-host of telecast for USA Network.
(Photo provided by Westminster Kennel Club)*

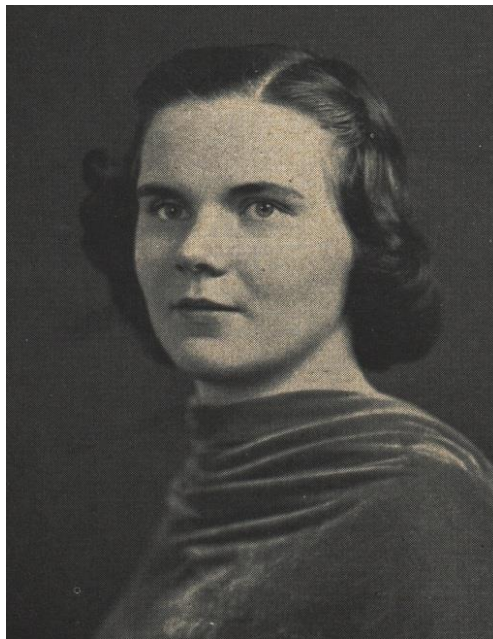
A lover of animals and raised in a family of veterinarians—including her father, brother, uncle and two cousins— it seemed only natural that she would also seek a veterinary degree.

However, it was not that simple during the 1930s as fewer than 40 women had graduated from veterinary colleges in the US, and none had graduated from Penn. In addition, she had a serious hearing impairment.

Dr. Deubler not only earned her V.M.D., but stayed at the University of Pennsylvania and received her PhD degree in 1944. She was the first woman on the veterinary school's faculty and spent her entire professional career teaching and doing research.

Her classmates paid her the following tribute in the 1938 school yearbook:

"'Joe' entered our class as the first coed to enroll in the regular course of the Veterinary School. She has in her quiet, determined, independent manner weathered the storms which to so many of us proved fatal. We congratulate 'Joesy' for being the first woman student to successfully complete the required work for graduation from this school. We are proud to have her as one of us. Her ever untiring efforts to help and the commanding spirit with which she has led her junior assistants have been commendable from the start to the finish. Her broad mindedness and sincerity towards the profession and its arts lead us to believe that she will go far in the field which she has chosen. 'Joe' has proven that there is a place for the female sex in the Veterinary profession."



*Graduation photo of Dr. Mary Josephine Deubler, Class of 1938.
Despite being "Just as quiet as a mouse",
she was also described by her classmates as having
"proven that there is a place for the female sex in the Veterinary profession."
(Photo provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine)*

"Jo," as she was affectionately known in the dog world, bred and raised Dandie Dinmont Terriers. Licensed as an American Kennel Club judge in 1962, she worked her way up the judging circuit reaching its acme at the Garden in February 1998. She selected a Norwich Terrier as the winner.



Dr. Deubler, Best in Show Judge at the 1998 Westminster Kennel Club
(Photo provided by Westminster Kennel Club)

Though she officially retired in 1987, Dr. Deubler remained active in veterinary and dog fancier circles until her death four years ago at age 92.

Despite the many veterinary tributes which were bestowed upon her, Dr. Deubler considered her greatest professional honor being selected to judge Best in Show at the Garden.

KEYWORDS:

History of Veterinary Medicine
University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine
Dr. Josephine Deubler
Mary Josephine Deubler
Westminster Kennel Club
Best in Show

Dandie Dinmont Terrier

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.